2:Oberg E-5 (1946-1947)1949 SK7 Guana SK7
Terena
[Chaco Period]

THE TERENA

(Pls. 1–11)

TERENA ECONOMY IN THE CHACO

HABITAT

Although it is no longer possible to determine by direct investigation the exact nature of the economy of the Terena upon their entry into the Chaco, indirect evidence points to agriculture as being the basis of subsistence. The Terena are an Arawak-speaking people and the Arawak-speaking tribes in the Amazon Basin are predominantly agriculturists. Terena myths tell of how *Yúrikoyuwakái* taught the people to practice agriculture:

> The Indians were hungry but they had no tools and did not know how to obtain food. The twins then gave the Indians all their tools. To the men, *Yúrikoyuwakái* gave the ax, *povóoti;* the digging stick, *ilomo'i;* the knife, *pirilou;* the sickle, *yopilocóti;* the war club, *palé'oi;* the bow, *shokié;* arrows, *shamd;* and the spear, *suiké.* To the women, the twins gave the spindle, *hopóo. Yúrikoyuwakái* then taught the Indians how to hunt, fish, and grow crops.

We know, too, from old records, that the Arawak-speaking neighbors of the Terena were agriculturists. Thus, although no direct written or verbal evidence exists concerning the original nature of Terena economy it appears reasonably safe to assume that they were agriculturists in pre-Columbian days.

The Terena now describe their economic life in the Chaco as having been based on agriculture, hunting, fishing, collecting, and raiding. This shift away from an emphasis on agriculture is understandable. The Chaco with comparatively greater sources of wild food plants, fish, and game than existed in the tropical forest, offered not only the resources but a stimulus for their use. In addition, the practice of agriculture in the Chaco was not the same as in the rain forest. The long drought period in the Chaco demanded a storable surplus not necessary in a region where annual rainfall is more evenly distributed. Above all, the Terena came into contact with Chaco tribes that depended principally upon hunting, fishing, and collecting, and a mutual exchange of economic customs seems to have taken place. When the Terena took over the horse and the practice of hunting and raiding their neighbors on horseback, dependence

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on agriculture became even less important. Conditions of the physical environment and cultural contacts, therefore, help to explain the economic readjustments which the Terena appear to have made in the Chaco.

Geographically the region formerly occupied by the Terena belongs to the great depressed plain of the upper Paraguay River known as the Chaco. The northeastern part of this plain is characterized by vast swamps relieved here and there by low crystalline hills. This part of the Chaco, too, has greater precipitation than the semiarid central Chaco. The Terena speak of their Chaco home as being wet and refer to dangers from floods. Although the annual rainfall here is estimated at 50 inches, it must be remembered that the rains fall from October to May, the remaining months being extremely dry. In the summer months, temperatures may reach over 100° F. During the winter months of July and August cold winds blow from the south, often bringing below-freezing temperatures.

This part of the Chaco is classified as savanna, swampy near the Paraguay River but merging into scrub forest to the west, with denser "galeria" forests lining the more permanent water courses. In the past, this region was particularly rich in plant and animal life which could be readily converted to human use. Among the wild plants which were of subsistence value to man were such trees and shrubs as the algarroba (*Prosopis*), the acacia, the Barbary fig, the chañar (*Courlica decorticans*), mistol, the wild orange, and a wide variety of palms. Wild rice grew in the swamps. Locusts and the larvae and honey of bees were used. The scrub forests and swamps were the home of such animals as the deer, peccary, tapir, capybara, and the jaguar. Land and water birds were plentiful, and the rivers were stocked with many varieties of fish as well as turtles and shellfish.

Discussing the resources of the Chaná (Guaná), Sánches Labrador says:

> The "Palo Santo" is the most widespread tree. They employ the hardwood of this tree to make spades to use in their fields, and pipes to smoke tobacco, which they appreciate very much. Birds are more abundant on the west bank of the river than on the east bank. The birds feed in the fields of the Chaná. They hunt many birds

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P.8-A]

[P.6-B]

beans, which they leave to take care of themselves. When they think that the crops ought to be matured, they send a messenger to find out. If these inspectors bring good news, they will return to their settlements and look after their fields. [Sánchez Labrador, 1910–17, vol. 2, p. 258.]

The first rains of the season, usually in late September or October, gave the signal for planting. Lands selected for cultivation were first cleared of trees, underbrush, and grass with an ax (originally made of stone but in post-Columbian times of iron). The trees and bushes were then burnt and the ashes scattered over the field. With a digging stick, *ilome'i*, made from the wood of the "palo santo," the cultivator would then dig the ground, squatting on his heels, moving from place to place until the field was turned. With the coming of the Spaniards the Terena claim they began to use iron hoes and even a simple iron-shod wooden plow drawn by oxen. After the field was prepared the Terena waited for the first rains before putting in the seed. "We waited," they say, "until the first flowers appeared on the trees."

The above information checks closely with what Sánchez Labrador observed in the middle of the eighteenth century:

The Chaná are a good-humoured, modest people. They have a peculiar way of cultivating the land. With the above-mentioned spades they dig and weed, not as the Spaniards do, but sitting down. Their spades have handles one and one-half yards in length. The Chaná sit down and work with their spades as far as they can reach and then move along until all the land has been prepared for planting. They cultivate manioc, maize, beans, squashes, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and some cotton. [Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 291–292.]

The economic unit was the family or household, which consisted of the husband and wife, the children, and, in some cases, the sons-in-law. The clearing and digging of the land were performed by men. Women and children assisted in planting, weeding, and harvesting. Cotton seeds, for instance, could be planted only by women.

The principal crops grown by the Terena were maize, sweet and bitter manioc, cará, beans, sweet-potatoes, pumpkins, gourds, sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco.

Maize (soporó).—The Terena distinguished at least three kinds of maize: A long-eared yellow maize called *hianketi-soporó*, a white variety called *heopuiti-soporó*, and a mixed-colored ear called *kuati-soporó*. Maize was planted at the beginning of the rains and was ready for use 3 to 6

THE VILLAGE OF BANANAL

The village of Bananal (P. I. Taunay) is situated about 4 km. north of the railroad station of Taunay. Bananal and the surrounding Indian lands are located on a low plateau which rises gently from the valley of the Aquidauana River. The soils of the plateau, laterites and tropical red soils, are derived from a crystalline base. The native vegetation belonging to the savanna belt of Central Brazil consists of scrub forest and grass, with heavier forest in the permanent water courses. The plateau is cut by numerous streams which are practically dry in the dry season but swell into relatively large streams during the rains extending from October to April. Erosion is superficial, as the vegetative cover has not been disturbed by overgrazing or extensive plowing.

The village is laid out in rectangular blocks separated by broad streets lined with mango trees. The central avenue forms part of the road which runs from Taunay to the Terena village of Ipegue, some 3 km. northeast of Bananal. Surrounding Bananal and Ipegue are large fazendas, many of which are connected by minor roads or paths.

The water supply for the inhabitants of the village is furnished by 12 wells, ranging in depth from 40 to 50 feet, 6 of which were constructed by the Government. At least two of the Government wells are furnished with pumps, one being operated by a windmill. Water for the stock, washing clothes, and taking baths is furnished by two dams on the outskirts of the village. Firewood for cooking is cut in the scrub forest outside the village. Areas not fenced in for farming are used as common pasture.

The official center of Bananal is the Post, consisting of such buildings as the residence of the manager, the school, the hospital, and the official visitors' building. These buildings are all made of red brick with tile roofs and unglazed tile floors. They are fenced in and surrounded by orange, lemon, and mango trees. None of the buildings have more than one story. In addition to these Government buildings, there is the Protestant mission school and the Catholic church. The rest of the buildings belong to the Indians. From a total of 86 buildings in the village, 75 are occupied.

Terena houses vary, not so much in size and shape, as in the material from which they are con-

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 22-A--Analyst]

/85 cont./ [Bananal and Ipegue]

361 tendency to urbanization, did not fail to contaminate Ipegue,
[628] for the simple reason that the inhabitants of Ipegue had to go
[496] through Bananal to reach the railroad line; this owing to the geographic position of Bananal, situated between that aldea
[133] and the neo-Brazilian settlement of Taunay. The boundary
[132] between the two aldeas is Ipegue stream, full during the rainy reason--December to February--and reduced to a stream in the
[312] dry season, easily crossed on foot. It and two reservoirs, one in each /86/ of the aldeas, supply the communities with water.
[231] Which is not to say that in some years Ipegue and Bananal have not suffered from total drought; this is also the problem of Cachoeirinha, Passarinho, and Moreira.

[184] The layout of Ipegue is the same as that of Bananal,
[348] excepting naturally that degree imposed by the tendency to a more rapid urbanization of the latter. It comprises a central nucleus of 50 houses, aside from the post (a subpost, subordinate to the Taunay Native Post), the school, and the Catholic
[491] church. At the boundary with Bananal, that is, close to Ipegue stream, thus next to the road that connects the two aldeas, we find five ranchos with their respective farm plots. On the other side, northwest of Ipegue, on the boundaries of the reservation, there is a concentration of ranchos, about a half
[241] score, at the place called "Roças." Similarly to Cachoeirinha and Bananal, the farm plots of the inhabitants of the central nucleus are quite far off, in duly fenced-in areas, protected not only from cattle but also from pigs and chickens.

621 Ecologically speaking, Ipegue and Bananal are tied to
439 the city of Aquidauana, whereas Cachoeirinha, Moreira, Passarinho, União, and Lalima are tied to Miranda. The major purchases in those communities are made in Aquidauana,
[441] while minor ones are made in Taunay. In this regard, we had
[443] the opportunity to meet the Terêna "bolichoeiro" of Bananal, in Aquidauana, and we saw the amount of his purchases to supply his store in the aldea. But, aside from Bananal and Ipegue, two other aldeas are also tied to Aquidauana and far more intimately so: they are Limão Verde and Aldeinha.

M /87 cont./
621 Miranda was founded in the year 1797 by Caetano Pinto
175 de Miranda. The topographical position taken by the Barão
[361] de Melgaco is as follows: 20° 14' south latitude, 58° 24' 16" longitude west of Paris.

M Miranda was raised to /the rank/ of villa on May 30, 1857.
[727] Completely destroyed in the year 1865 by the Paraguayans, the
[233] fields and houses were burned and the inhabitants who could not escape were slain; the cattle, principal wealth of this municipio, was transported, almost completely, to Paraguay, in a number in excess of 300,000 head. Those who returned
G in the year 1871 found Miranda thus devastated.
M
233 The fields are excellent and are well situated for the
162 pastoral industry. The municipio has about 15,000 inhabitants;
M the villa of Miranda has 78 houses with tile roofs and a good
361 number of ranchos, /88/ in addition a church, a cemetery,
368 two public schools for the two sexes, and a private school, "Christovão Columbo," which is divided into two sections, for the two sexes, directed by Sr. Francisco Augusto Ribeiro, and which has received the prize as second-ranking school of the
G primary grades in the Brazilian Republic.
M
133 The Miranda River is very small and flows into the Paraguay
M River; it is navigable by craft of shallow draft; from its mouth
505 to the villa of Miranda it is approximately 180 kilometers. The only boat which navigates this river up to Miranda is a small steamer called the Erba, which belongs to Sr. Giasone
G Rebna, who is the only one who sustains the municipio of
M Miranda with his trading. The climate is moderate, the
132 temperature indicates on the hottest days 34° C. in the shade,
G and it goes down as much as five degrees; in the winter it
M
134 ranges from 22° to 28° C. Miranda has extremely fertile lands for agriculture.

G There are minerals in great quantities, such as gold,
M
135 iron, hard coal /carbón de piedra/, rock crystal, marble, malacacheta /malachite?/, which have not as yet been worked.